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Armor Center Committed To Army Transformation

We just concluded the annual Armor Conference at Fort Knox, and from my perspective it was a great success. This year's goal was to offer attendees a broad review of training ideas and opportunities offered by the Armor Center and by other leaders in this field. Subject matter experts addressed training issues across the Army as well as provided updates on critical developments in the mounted force. A number of impressive keynote speakers included Vice Chief of the Army, General John M. Keane; Commanding General, III Corps, Lieutenant General B.B. Bell; Deputy Commanding General TRADOC, Lieutenant General Larry Jordan; Director of the Army National Guard, Lieutenant General Roger C. Schultz; and Commanding General Infantry Center, Major General Paul D. Eaton. A wide variety of vendors displayed the newest equipment and technology offered to the force. As you would expect, we also enjoyed several social events to allow old friends to catch up on the latest events and for new friendships to begin.

One of the key areas discussed at the Armor Conference was the Transformation of the Army. I will share with you the Armor Center's perspective on that topic. Before I do, let me assure you that our primary mission remains the same, and that is to train mounted warriors for our force.

The Armor Center is decisively engaged in providing training strategies and doctrinal products that support both today's Army and the Army of the future. For example, between June and September of this year, the Directorate of Training and Doctrine Development will publish over 10 Legacy, 13 Transformation, and 7 Gunnery Field Manuals and ARTEP Mission Training Plans (MTP).

Fort Knox and the Armor Center remain committed to the Army's transformational efforts for our future Army. The RSTA Squadron continues to move forward in collective training, and is preparing to receive the initial ICV-Reconnaissance variants this fall. Upon completion of training, they will be prepared to deploy as the critical enabling component, the Stryker Brigade Combat Team. Along a similar path, we continue to refine the organization of the 2d Cavalry Regiment from an analog, HMMWV-based cavalry regiment into a digital, Stryker-based Cavalry Regiment, capable of supporting the XVIII Airborne Corps in operations worldwide. The Army Chief of Staff approved the concept and we continue to develop the best force effectiveness we can achieve.

Fort Knox and the Armor community are actively engaged in bringing the Objective Force to reality. As I reported to you earlier this year, the TRADOC Commander has named Fort Knox as the proponent for the Unit of Action, the primary combat unit of the Objective Force, and as the proponent for the Future Combat System (FCS) — a system of systems. In a revolutionary effort to field an entire force rather than just individual platforms, we have stood up the Unit of Action Maneuver Battle Lab. This Battle Lab serves as the hub for collaborative efforts between all TRADOC battle labs, other Army organizations, joint agencies, and academia. Together with these spokes, we will coordinate the development of this system of systems. In the coming years, this organization will prove to be an invaluable asset to the Army and to our nation for force development and force fielding.

The Unit of Action is not about platforms, it is a system of systems ap-

proach to designing a force. What that means is that the warfighters, the equipment, the training, and the doctrine must be developed and function in a complementary and synergistic way. Some of that equipment exists today, like the RAH-66 Comanche, a critical component of our air/ground team for our reconnaissance forces, as well as a killing capability that is unmatched. Much of it has yet to be developed, but the development will enable a command driven, information enabled force that will dominate any battlefield.

General Keane reminded us that during its 227 years, the Army has never failed our nation. The Armor Center is engaged in many diverse challenges to support this record, yet one thing remains the focus of all our activities — THE SOLDIER. We continue to develop and implement new and better ways to train multiskilled soldiers, Marines, and adaptive leaders for a wide array of 21st-century missions. The young Army and Marine tankers, cavalrymen, and mechanics who we are training remain the Armor force's focal point. The thousands of young men who complete their basic training at Fort Knox and go on to other branches and specialties are better for being trained here. Our noncommissioned officers and officer courses help hone leadership skills that make our Army what it is today. Despite all the gizmos and gadgets we design, soldiers remain the most amazing technical advantage that America's Army has had for the past 227 years and will have for the next 227 years!

Forge the Thunderbolt!